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SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Note prepared by the secretariat

1. This note has been prepared in accordance with the report of the Working Group set up by the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission on 5 October 1992 for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission. The present text has been revised to reflect the proceedings of the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of 24 January and meetings held since that date. It contains the highlights and difficulties encountered in implementing the programme of work, as well as other relevant issues of the work of the Commission's subsidiary bodies since the forty-seventh session, and draws attention to those matters which require the consideration, action or decision of the Commission. This note is not intended to duplicate the reports of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies, to which delegations should refer for greater detail about matters contained herein.
2. The Summary Document is intended to assist delegations in their review of the ECE programme of work and to guide them to the difficulties and the points of excellence and innovation in the programme of work, on which they will need to focus attention and give the subsidiary bodies and the secretariat guidance for the coming year. As such the Document is not meant to repeat in detail what can be found in the reports of the PSBs.
3. While in most cases the programme of work is synonymous with the work of the PSBs, attention must also be given to programme activities which are not within the purview of a PSB, such as the secretariat's independent research publications, regional preparatory conferences organized in response to General Assembly resolutions (sub-programme 00) as well as the identification of cross-sectoral activities which involve more than one PSB.

POLICY AND COORDINATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION (Sub-programme 0)

4. At the Special Session convened on 5 October 1992 the Commission adopted resolution 1 (1992-S) - Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields: Strengthening the role and functions of the regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Europe - in response to General Assembly resolution 46/235. The resolution drew the Assembly's attention to the comparative advantages of the ECE, its contribution to the process of revitalization and restructuring of the United Nations, and the necessity to strengthen its cooperation and coordination of work with other international organizations and institutions. It stressed the need for the timely provision of resources for ECE and the importance of a speedy and effective implementation of the ECE programme in favour of the countries in transition. It recommended to the Assembly that adequate budgetary and financial provision be made to enable ECE to discharge its responsibilities; that a more effective distribution of responsibilities and a better balance between Headquarters departments and ECE be achieved; that the results of ECE's work be made available to the UN global programmes; and that its operational activities also benefit the developing countries of other regions.

5. The Commission has continued to implement the provisions of decision O (45) - The activities of the Economic Commission for Europe - as indicated in the elements set out below for the various sub-programmes of the Commission's programme of work. The provisions of the decision continue to govern the prioritization of the Commission's work, the use of resources, its structure and methods of work and its calendar of meetings, as well as its activities designed to assist the countries of the region which are in transition to a market economy.

6. In implementation of decision B (47), the Executive Secretary submitted the decision to the Secretary-General and has continued to pursue the objectives set by the decision for the appointment of staff to fill vacancies in the priority areas of the Commission's work. A number of exceptions have been granted by the Department of Administration and Management to the temporary suspension of recruitment to permit the appointment of staff to the ECE. The new procedures established in October 1992 for a central review of vacancies have to date resulted in the agreement by Headquarters that all ECE vacancies in 1992 will remain in the ECE staffing-table. (See document E/ECE/1274.)

7. In implementation of the provisions of decisions O (45), D (45) and B (46) the Commission has continued to organize activities designed to assist the countries of the region which are in transition to a market economy. In particular the ECE programme of workshops has been developed further, and more than 70 workshops have been held mainly in the transition countries and on topics which they themselves have proposed. In order to assist those countries to overcome the difficulties which they face in financing their participation in the workshops a trust fund has been set up to receive contributions from member Governments, donor organizations and institutions and the private sector. (See document E/ECE/1272.)

8. The question of ensuring the participation of representatives of transition countries, particularly the new member States of the Commission, in the activities of the ECE is of great significance. Delegations participating in the sessions of virtually all PSBs have expressed concern that those countries are often unable to afford to participate in the work of the Commission for lack of hard currency. There have been repeated calls for a solution to this problem. In its resolution 1 (1992-S) referred to above the Commission expressed its conviction that there was a necessity to ensure, in response to ECOSOC decision 1992/43, that all ECE member States could participate fully and effectively in the work of the Commission.

9. In response to Commission decisions O (45) and B (46), more than 80% of the time of the Division for Economic Analysis and Projections (DEAP) is now devoted to the analysis of the transition economies and related policy issues. This new emphasis is reflected in the Economic Survey of Europe and the Economic Bulletin for Europe, both of which contain an increased coverage of economic and policy developments in the transition economies. The inclusion in both these publications of an opening chapter focused on major policy issues, including western policies in support of the transition process, has been welcomed by member Governments and has provided a focus for discussion of current issues at the Senior Economic Advisers, the Committee on the Development of Trade and at the annual sessions of the Commission itself. For the past three years these publications have also contained a number of analyses of special topics concerning the transition process: for example, property rights and privatization, east-west migration, the effects of German re-unification and the collapse of intra-CMEA trade. The economic analysis prepared for these two publications has also been used directly by other ECE divisions in the preparation of their annual reports and other publications for their respective Principal Subsidiary Bodies.

10. The ECE work in the area of economic analysis has considerably benefited from a much closer cooperation between the secretariat and the Senior Economic Advisers than had existed in the past. Thanks to the new timing of the annual session (late May or early June rather than February), the Senior Economic Advisers are now regularly supplied with the main findings of the Survey in due time. At the same time they have an opportunity to suggest items that should be highlighted in subsequent issues of the publication. They also receive a similar condensed overview of major developments and policy issues based on the Economic Bulletin for Europe, which helps their own work and keeps them abreast of ECE analysis between the annual sessions.

11. The DEAP faces considerable difficulty in meeting the Commission's request for "high quality observation and analysis" of the transition economies (decision B (46)). The number of transition economies which need to be analysed has risen from 8 (before 1989) to 18, and is expected to increase further. This has meant a commensurate increase not only in the required volume of economic analysis but also in the tasks of collecting and processing the necessary statistical data. The secretariat has increased its contacts with statistical offices in the transition countries, has tried to improve statistical cooperation with other international organizations, and has set up a joint statistical unit, based on DEAP and the Statistical Division, to meet the increased demands for the collection and analysis of statistical data, as called for in decision O (45). Nevertheless, despite some progress in these

directions, available resources of personnel, equipment and funds for travel and consultancies are less than adequate to respond effectively to the new situation.

12. The ECE, jointly with the Council of Europe and UNFPA, is organizing the European Population Conference which will be held in Geneva from 23-26 March 1993. The Conference is in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development convened by the General Assembly in 1994. The agenda and programme for the European Conference, as well as the draft recommendations to be adopted at the meeting, have been circulated to all ECE member Governments. The Preparatory Meeting held in Strasbourg in November 1992 took note of the need to assist countries in transition, especially new member States, to participate in the Conference. Accordingly the secretariat has addressed an appeal to other ECE members to contribute funds for this purpose.

13. The Commission may also wish to take into account a number of other resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session as set out in document E/ECE/1279.

ENVIRONMENT (Sub-programme 1)

14. The sixth session of the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems was held in Geneva from 16 to 19 March 1993. The report of the session is contained in document ECE/ENVWA/29. The session was attended by 32 ECE member countries of which 14 were countries in transition.

15. The Senior Advisers adopted their contribution to the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Lucerne, Switzerland, 28-30 April 1992) as contained in document ECE/ENVWA/30. They also elaborated proposals for inclusion in the Ministerial declaration (ECE/ENVWA/30/Add.1) for submission to the Expert Group for the preparation of the Conference.

16. The Senior Advisers examined progress made in the interim implementation of the Conventions on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents, and Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, pursuant to the decisions taken by the Commission (E (47)) and the Senior Advisers (resolution adopted in 1993 and decision B(5)).

17. With regard to the follow-up to UNCED, the Senior Advisers thanked the secretariat for the preparation of document ENVWA/R.69 and decided to submit it to the Commission recommending that all PSBs be invited to consider proposals contained therein of relevance to their work programmes and to elaborate proposals for action for consideration by the Commission at its forty-ninth session; and requested the Bureau of the Senior Advisers to elaborate a proposal on priorities and possible detailed action to be taken by the Senior Advisers themselves on the basis of relevant provisions contained in document ENVWA/R.69 and taking into account the results of the Lucerne Ministerial Conference, for consideration at a consultation of heads of delegations to be convened in Autumn 1993.

18. The delegation of Sweden stressed the importance of the convening of a regional conference on transport and the environment under the auspices of ECE and with the support of the Senior Advisers. The Senior Advisers supported this proposal, provided the Commission takes concrete steps towards the holding of the conference, after having studied its feasibility. They also emphasized the need for organizing such a conference on a multidisciplinary basis in close cooperation between the Senior Advisers, the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Energy.

19. The Senior Advisers took note of the progress made in the preparations for the Seminar on Low-waste Technology and Environmentally Sound Products (Warsaw, Poland, 24-28 May 1993) and decided to convene in 1994 an ad hoc meeting in Austria, in cooperation with OECD, to review progress in the application of OECD systems and practices on management of chemicals in the ECE countries non-members of OECD. They also took note with satisfaction of the launching of the ECE/UNEP activities on Strengthening Environmental Capabilities in Eastern and Central European Countries, and adopted guidelines on the ecosystem approach in water management and policy recommendations on water-quality criteria and objectives. Wide dissemination of documents was decided on "Protection of Water Resources and Aquatic Ecosystems", "Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements in Europe and North America on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Waters" and "Bilateral and Multilateral Financial Cooperation in the ECE Region of relevance to Environmental Protection".

20. The Senior Advisers requested the Bureau, with the assistance of the secretariat, to prepare a proposal on possible action on environmental performance reviews in the light of the results of the Lucerne Ministerial Conference, for consideration by the consultation of the heads of delegation in autumn 1993.

21. As regards the role of the Senior Advisers in the new European context, the Senior Advisers decided to enlarge the Bureau to seven members, endorsed the general orientation of document ENVWA/R.81 and requested the newly elected Bureau to prepare, with the assistance of the secretariat, a proposal for the restructured programme of work and revised terms of reference, for consideration by the heads of delegation at their consultation in autumn 1993 and subsequent submission to the Senior Advisers at their seventh session.

22. The Senior Advisers voiced their concern that the resources assigned to the Division were barely adequate for the existing programme of work. The current recruitment freeze has resulted in the need to postpone certain activities. The implementation of some ongoing programme activities has been conditional on the availability of secretariat resources. Moreover, no new work, including the country performance reviews mentioned above, can be undertaken unless additional secretariat resources are made available.

23. In accordance with the recommendation of the Working Group for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission that the round of meetings of PSBs be completed by 31 December each year, the next session of the Senior Advisers has been tentatively scheduled for June 1994.

TRANSPORT (Sub-programme 2)

24. The fifty-fifth session of the Inland Transport Committee met from 1-5 February 1993. The provisional agenda and programme of work are contained in documents ECE/TRANS/96 and ECE/TRANS/97/Add.1 respectively. In order to take account of the recommendation of the Working Group for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission that the reports of PSBs be submitted in time to the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting of the Commission, the fifty-sixth session of the Committee has been scheduled from 17-21 January 1994, subject to the approval of the Commission. The report of the Committee on its fifty-fifth session has been circulated in document ECE/TRANS/97.

25. In order to increase the efficiency of its work a Coordination Meeting of the Committee was set up in order to prepare the annual session of the Committee.

26. The main items dealt with by the last session of the Committee in implementation of the provisions of Commission decision F (47) include the revision of important transport agreements, work on infrastructure, road safety, assistance to countries in transition, follow-up to the Prague Conference, and environmental considerations.

27. Work on the revision of transport conventions and agreements focused on the AGR which will also take into account environmental considerations, the 1958 Agreement, the AETR, the elaboration of a number of customs agreements as well as preparatory work for the AGN.

28. Following the decision to align the European Regulations for the transport of dangerous goods by road (ADR) with those for rail (RID) and to achieve full harmonization of all modal rules with the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the activities of the bodies concerned and serviced by the ECE secretariat have intensified markedly. Intensive work will also be carried out in 1993 for the revision of the European Provisions of ADN and the development in 1994 of an ADN agreement. The importance of work in the field of transport of dangerous goods may also be seen by the declaration of intention of RID/ADR countries to apply RID/ADR in addition to international transport, also to national transport.

29. In the framework of the AGTC, standards for international combined transport using inland waterways transport were prepared and adopted in the form of a Resolution. Furthermore, work continues on regulations concerning the trans-shipment of dangerous goods in combined transport operations.

30. The organization of the global ECE Seminar on container dimensions and the substantive contributions made by the ECE Working Party on Combined Transport have shown the flexibility of the ECE in taking up emerging issues and in providing, at short notice, machinery for cooperative governmental action as well as a forum for the dialogue between governments and industry. The Resolution adopted by the Committee on the subject inter alia underlines the need to identify the benefits of a possible introduction of larger containers.

31. Administrative and technical problems at borders in international rail

transport are being analysed, and proposals for measures to eliminate them will be prepared.

32. Noting that conventions and agreements are some of the main outputs of the Committee, consideration has been given to ways and means of enabling governments, particularly those of new member States, to accede to these international legal instruments. In the field of road transport facilitation, the implementation of international instruments has been promoted with the help of ad hoc groups of experts.

33. The classification of European inland waterways, which is a prerequisite for the elaboration of an all-European agreement on inland waterway transport infrastructure, was adopted and a study on the establishment of a network of main inland waterways of international importance was launched.

34. Coordination of transport infrastructures of different modes of transport, as well as combined transport in all European Countries, was discussed. An appropriate organizational structure for carrying out such work will be considered.

35. New activities in cooperation with WHO, ILO, UNEP and OECD have also been initiated as a result of the adoption of Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 by UNCED.

36. Further cooperation has been established with ILO on the alleviation of hardship to road-transport drivers caught at frontier blockades. The Committee also adopted a Resolution concerning the improvement of traffic fluidity and prevention of hardship to drivers which may arise from traffic disruption.

37. The Committee was informed of the progress made in the TEM and TER projects, including new east-west connections, higher priority to combined transport and the status of trust funds which have been established to continue work, noting that UNDP funding has been discontinued.

38. A Resolution was adopted by the Committee on the organization of a second Road Safety Week to be held in 1995.

39. In respect of transition countries, the Committee endorsed a decision of the Working Party WP.5 concerning the establishment of an inventory regarding the reform process in central and east European countries related to changes under way in the regulatory and institutional field of transport. The Committee also noted the difficulty encountered in providing assistance to transition countries because of insufficient funds. This has hampered the secretariat's participation in workshops as well as that of representatives from transition and new member countries.

40. Shortage of staff due to the recruitment freeze has created difficulties in the field of the transport of dangerous goods and transport statistics. This has also had an impact on the capacity to provide assistance to countries in transition. The Committee requested that all vacant posts in the Transport Division be filled as soon as possible including the additional post provided in the area of the transport of dangerous goods.

41. As a follow-up to Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, a proposal was made by the Government of Sweden indicating the importance of the convening in the ECE region of a regional Conference on Transport and the Environment and suggesting that ECE take the initiative of convening a preparatory Committee responsible for the preparation of the Conference. The Inland Transport Committee supported the Swedish proposal, provided the Commission would take positive steps towards the adoption of the principle of holding the Conference, after having studied its feasibility.

42. As a follow-up to ECOSOC decision 1991/74, ECE and ECA continue their joint work on the evaluation of studies made for the construction of a permanent link across the Strait of Gibraltar. However, since resolution 1992/45 insists that these activities not impose any financial burden on the budgets of the two commissions, and that existing priorities be respected, the secretariat is encountering difficulty in financing its contribution to this work.

43. Following recent political and economic changes in Europe and the subsequent Commission's deliberations and decisions at its resumed forty-fifth session, the Committee adopted a new version of its Terms of Reference.

44. The Committee decided that a proposal by the secretariat to elaborate a transport efficiency programme should be discussed by the next Coordination Meeting of the Committee.

STATISTICS (Sub-programme 3)

45. The Conference of European Statisticians held its fortieth session from 15-19 June 1992. It was attended, inter alia, by 38 ECE countries of which 35 were represented by the executive heads of national statistical offices. The report of the session is contained in document ECE/CES/40.

46. The Bureau and the Conference expressed satisfaction with the service provided by the "Steering Document" in enabling ECE countries to stay abreast of directions taken by the statistical system in transition countries, and approved proposals for evaluating the results of technical assistance.

47. The Bureau of the Conference, with the participation of the Statistical Directors of Eurostat and OECD, met from 26-27 October 1992 and again from 15-16 February 1993. It congratulated the secretariats on the improvement of coordination between the ECE, Eurostat and OECD work programmes through Joint Programme Review meetings. It agreed that as of the 1993 plenary session, the draft work programmes of the Conference, Eurostat and the OECD in all fields of statistics would be presented in an integrated manner in the same document, following the Conference format. Although the work programmes of Eurostat and the OECD would be presented for informational purposes only, the Bureau considered that an integrated presentation of the three work programmes should facilitate priority setting and lead to greater transparency and further improvements in coordination. The OECD will organize a half-day meeting during the week of the plenary session for OECD countries to review the OECD programme.

48. The Bureau also took note of the significant progress in the secretariat mechanism for better cooperation and coordination between the ECE, Eurostat and the OECD, and world-level organizations including the IMF, the World Bank and ILO (e.g. intersecretariat working groups in selected fields of statistics and annual joint programme review meetings). Despite the added cost occasioned by additional secretariat travel, the time allocated to such coordination has proved to be highly productive and has improved efficiency in the view of both the Bureau and the secretariat.

49. The findings of the Working Group which the Conference had established in response to decision O (45) to evaluate ECE statistical publications have been made available to all PSBs for comment. A member of the Statistical Division has participated in the PSB meetings in order to inform them of the outcome of the Conference's discussion on the findings of the Working Group and to introduce an ECE questionnaire designed to elicit their views. Replies from the PSBs and from individual delegates will be analysed and submitted to the Statistical Division for follow-up work. The Statistical Division, in consultation with other ECE divisions, has begun making some firm proposals in respect of a number of the ECE's 40 statistical publications. The Bureau of the Conference has prepared a progress report which will be made available to the forty-eighth session of the Commission.

50. The Bureau and the Conference expressed general satisfaction with the parts of the 1991/92 work programme which had been able to be implemented, but serious concern was voiced about the limited resources available to the priority area of statistics and the negative implications of vacancies in the Division on the implementation of the 1992/93 work programme. The Conference passed a strong Resolution on Secretariat Resources for submission to the Chairman of the Commission and transmission to the Secretary-General.

51. As a result of its concern about resource limitations, professional vacancies and the implications of increased membership in the ECE, the Conference suspended work planned for 1992/93 in designated fields and reduced its contribution to other activities. The 1992/93 meeting programme was similarly affected. This uncertainty also resulted in the Conference not attaching priority levels to programme elements in its programme of work for 1992/93. In addition, at its February 1993 meeting the Bureau of the Conference reluctantly decided that in the absence of the required additional resources, the work programme would have to be trimmed back at the 1993 plenary session so that work to be undertaken would generally match available resource levels in each part of the programme.

52. In response to Commission decision B (47) a new Director of the Statistical Division was appointed in October 1992 as an exception to the recruitment freeze. Two other professional posts have been filled during the freeze, and authorization has now been received to proceed with recruitment for the remaining three vacancies through the national competitive examinations.

53. Additional resources will be required to enable the Statistical Division to carry out its added responsibilities in developing improved coordination mechanisms for statistical work undertaken by the ECE, the EC and OECD, to provide stronger statistical support for the Commission's other priority areas

called for in decision O (45), including cross-sectoral activities, to collect and analyse statistics from new member States, and to assist and advise them, as necessary.

TRADE FACILITATION (Sub-programme 4)

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE (Sub-programme 7)

54. The Committee on the Development of Trade, whose mandate covers both the above sub-programmes, held its forty-first session from 8-10 December 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/TRADE/184.

55. The Committee reviewed its programme of work and reformulated it under three main headings: trade facilitation, trade promotion and trade analysis.

56. The Committee held a further in-depth discussion of the ECE work on trade facilitation and in particular UN/EDIFACT. Questions were asked as to the resource requirements for work on trade facilitation, including the EDIFACT trust fund, and areas of possible overlap with the Trade Efficiency programme launched by UNCTAD. The secretariat proposal for a programme of assistance to the countries in transition in the field of trade facilitation was well received. Similarly the secretariat decision to establish an inter-secretariat task force between ECE, UNCTAD and ITC to ensure greater cooperation and coordination of work in this field was welcomed.

57. Trade facilitation is a priority sector of the Commission and additional resources have been redeployed to the Trade Facilitation Section. In spite of the freeze on recruitment, the posts of Chief of Section, EDIFACT administrator and a programmer, as well as one general service support staff have been filled this year. Personal computers have been provided to all the professional staff in the section.

58. The work of the Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) is progressing rapidly. UN/EDIFACT has recently shown a marked increase in the number of messages developed. 124 messages have currently been approved at various stages of development, and 40 more messages were accepted during last week's WP.4 session as new work items to be developed. A new EDIFACT Board is under establishment, i.e. an African EDIFACT Board with the appointment of an EDIFACT Rapporteur from that region, the other regional EDIFACT Boards being the Western European EDIFACT Board, Eastern European EDIFACT Board, Asian EDIFACT Board, Australia/New Zealand EDIFACT Board and the Pan American EDIFACT Board.

59. To govern the dynamic growth of the EDIFACT development, an EDIFACT Steering Group has been established. The objective of this group is to restructure and streamline the EDIFACT procedures to enhance the production of messages. The group has already taken several important initiatives to achieve its objective; for example, it is planned that four EDIFACT directories will be published in 1993.

60. Other important work items addressed by WP.4 include the "Analysis of the International Trade Transaction". This work is of special importance for countries in transition. It is felt that this type of analysis together with

modern data modelling techniques gives countries in transition a tool with which to develop efficient trade procedures in order to be more competitive in western markets.

61. WP.4 is active in the legal field with a comprehensive work programme. Recently, contacts with UNCITRAL have been intensified and synergy effects are expected from this cooperation. At last week's session the legal team also concluded the revision of UN/ECE Recommendation No. 12, "Measures to Facilitate Maritime Transport Document Procedures".

62. To make the general debate more attractive, the Committee on the Development of Trade decided to select a discussion theme for each session on which delegations should concentrate their statements. The theme selected for the 1993 session is "The impact of trade facilitation on trade in the ECE region". The Bureau will play a more active role between sessions, and the secretariat will prepare discussion papers on the selected theme. In addition, a round-table will be organized on the same subject in consultation with the Bureau. Also, representatives of the Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures (WP.4) and its Groups of Experts will be invited to participate in the round-table.

63. Pursuant to Commission decision D (47), the Committee decided that the secretariat prepare a study analysing successful measures as well as negative experiences of the European countries in the field of privatization.

64. The secretariat was also requested to prepare a study on the establishment of conditions conducive to expanding trade among economies in transition.

65. Three workshops will be organized in 1993 in countries in transition. One will deal with the issue of promotion of foreign direct investment and will be held in Ljubljana (Slovenia). A second is expected to be on the subject of "Progress in the reform of foreign trade and payments in countries in transition", and tentatively scheduled in Tirana (Albania); and a third on the "Implication of privatization, including the role of SMEs, for international trade and investment" to be convened in a place yet to be decided. The secretariat was also requested to continue its work on information sources relevant to trade and investment activities in the economies in transition and needed by business operators. This subject was particularly stressed in the Helsinki Document 1992.

66. The Committee, aware of the important work being carried out by the Working Party on International Contract Practices in Industry, agreed that it should meet once in 1993 to enable it to complete the drafting of its new guide (on the financing of east-west trade/privatization in central and eastern Europe) by the forty-second session of the Committee to be held in December 1993. It requested the Working Party to make proposals on its future activities to the forty-second session of the Committee.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS (Sub-programme 5)

67. The Senior Economic Advisers to ECE Governments held their twenty-eighth

session from 1-5 June 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/EC.AD/40.

68. In the context of the annual meeting of the Senior Economic Advisers the secretariat has also organized a round-table to which outside experts are invited to discuss a topic concerning the transition process in the eastern countries. The proceedings of the first three round-tables have been published in the ECE's Discussion Papers series.

69. The Senior Economic Advisers have recently concentrated their work on subjects of major importance for the region suggested by individual Senior Economic Advisers and subsequently adopted by the Bureau. In 1992 the subjects focused on were (a) the economic slowdown in the market economies, and (b) restructuring of public enterprises and privatization: western experience and development in the transition countries. Thanks to an in-depth discussion during the session and inputs from the secretariat, the Senior Economic Advisers produced a number of substantive recommendations on both subjects which were reflected in the report of the twenty-eighth session.

70. Although the Senior Economic Advisers have so far organized only a few workshops on transition, the division has contributed to several organized by other PSBs. In addition to a lack of secretariat resources, another reason for the small number of workshops organized by the Senior Economic Advisers has been the very scarce resources of the transition countries themselves. To facilitate the holding of meetings under their auspices, the Senior Economic Advisers agreed at their last session that informal meetings were the best way to address some of the problems included in their work programme, as advocated by decision O (45). However, this raises the issue of language services required for such meetings.

71. The activities of the Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics, held under the auspices of the Senior Economic Advisers and the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems, provides an excellent example of a cross-sectoral approach. Experts representing these two fields of activity consider a number of issues related to various aspects of sustainable economic development, such as the assessment of the situation in the economies in transition, the impact of economic restructuring on the environment, various costing techniques for environmental policies and the use of economic instruments for further environmental goals. The third session of the Joint Working Group met on 19-21 January 1993. Other PSBs such as the Committee on Energy might be associated on an ad hoc basis with the Joint Working Group on Environment and Economics.

ENERGY (Sub-programme 6)

72. The Committee on Energy held its second session from 10-12 November 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/ENERGY/21.

73. The Committee noted that since negotiations on the basic agreement on the implementation of the European Energy Charter had yet to be completed, it was premature to define a precise ECE role. The Committee considered its earlier list of items for cooperation still valid, namely (a) energy efficiency, (b) gas and electric power interconnections and (c) techniques for clean

combustion of coal. The Commission at its Ad Hoc Informal Meeting on 5 October requested the secretariat to prepare a paper on its possible cooperation in implementing the European Energy Charter taking into account the proposal to establish a network secretariat. The paper has been circulated to delegations for the Ad Hoc Informal Meeting held on 25 January.

74. The Committee also welcomed the innovative paper prepared by the secretariat on Multilateral Assistance to Economies in Transition in the Field of Energy (ENERGY/R.76). It also expressed appreciation for the work done on workshops to assist countries in transition for which the energy sector was of great importance, as contained in the document submitted to the Committee.

75. The Committee approved the reports of the Steering Committee on the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project and requested governments which had not already pledged contributions to the Project Trust Fund to do so. It also asked them to endorse the initiative of central, eastern and southern ECE member States to work more extensively on energy-efficiency demonstration zones. The cooperation provided by the Committee on Human Settlements in this work was welcomed.

76. The Committee approved the proposed Global Energy Efficiency 21 Project, and recommended its endorsement by the Commission at its forty-eighth session. It called on the secretariat to continue the further preparation of the project which it judged to be an important interregional contribution to implementing Agenda 21, approved by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

77. The Committee referred the questionnaire on the evaluation of statistical publications in the energy field for written reply, as it had been tabled during the session and in one language only. It approved the request of its Working Party on Coal that the preparation and publication of the ECE Annual Bulletin of Coal Statistics be continued. A similar request was made by the Working Party on Gas, which met after the second session of the Committee (25-27 January 1993). The Working Party on Electric Power has not yet met.

78. The Committee asked the Executive Secretary and the Commission to give the necessary attention and resources to its programme, especially those activities designed to assist the economies in transition. It noted that the secretariat had attained a high degree of programme implementation despite difficult circumstances resulting from the redeployment of staff to priority areas of work in response to decision O (45) and also to unfilled professional posts during the recruitment freeze. It noted that a meeting on Renewable Sources of Energy and the publication of two seminar proceedings and of two studies had been postponed due to the lack of staff resources.

INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY (Sub-programme 8)

79. (a) The twentieth session of the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Science and Technology was held from 23-25 September 1992 in accordance with decision O (45). The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/SC.TECH/44. The twenty-first session of the Senior Advisers will take place in September 1994.

80. Several delegations at the session appreciated the marked change which was taking place in the perception of the usefulness of the Senior Advisers and expressed their readiness for a new, constructive dialogue.

81. The Senior Advisers noted the importance of reliable science and technology statistical data and attached particular importance to the work which was to be undertaken in close cooperation with OECD on the development of science and technology indicators for the countries of central and eastern Europe. At the same time they recognized the difficulties which the provision of such statistical data might pose for those countries. The Commission might encourage the authorities in western Europe and North America to provide the necessary assistance in order to establish comparative science and technology indicators for the economies in transition. The Senior Advisers also noted the importance of involving the Conference of European Statisticians in all work related to the development of these indicators and in organizing workshops in the countries of central and eastern Europe.

82. The Commission should also encourage the Commission of the European Communities and OECD to cooperate in organizing the Seminar on State Policy in Economies in Transition Aimed at Promoting Innovation, to be held in Poland in 1993.

83. There is a need to raise the visibility of the work of the Senior Advisers in national capitals and to explain the different roles which they can play in contributing to the process of reform in the economies in transition.

84. (b) The second session of the Working Party on Steel was held from 21-23 October 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/STEEL/80.

85. The Working Party has reorganized its work to concentrate on three basic areas of activity, namely the management of the evolution of the steel industry, questions of interest to countries in transition, and the protection of the environment. Delegations stressed the importance of the timely collection and dissemination of statistics since they were the basis of all substantive work.

86. Countries outside the region such as Brazil, China, Japan, Mexico and South Korea, as well as representatives of industry, continue to participate in the work of the Working Party.

87. Scope exists for closer cooperation with bodies such as the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems and the Committee on Energy in implementing programme elements under programme activity on environmental and resource issues in the iron and steel industry, and possibly with the Conference of European Statisticians on the development of steel statistics.

88. Cooperation with other relevant organizations, in particular the Commission of the European Communities, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is active.

89. Implementation of the programme of work of the Working Party will be seriously affected during 1993 if the freeze on professional recruitment continues, since one of the two professional posts in the Steel Section will become vacant during 1993. In noting the lack of secretariat resources for the work of the Working Party, delegates underlined the need for assistance from industry. Note was taken of the contribution of Japanese industry, which has made an expert available to the secretariat for a period of two years.

90. (c) The second session of the Working Party on the Chemical Industry was held from 7-9 October 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/CHEM/86.

91. The Working Party "took note with interest of the initiative of the delegation of Poland to submit a draft decision on cooperation and sustainable industrial development ... for adoption [by the Commission] at its forty-eighth session". Most delegations welcomed this initiative, but some reserved their positions.

92. Considerable scope exists in the implementation of the programme of work of the Working Party for closer cooperation with the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems on sustainable development in the chemical industry and, in particular, the elaboration of a project proposal on the establishment in Poland of a Regional Environmental Management Centre for the Chemical Industry, the environmental clean-up of selected chemical production sites, and waste treatment in industrial parks. Similar close cooperation is envisaged with the Conference of European Statisticians on the development of internationally comparable statistics, including those for specialized products.

93. Close cooperation has been established with the Commission of the European Communities and the European Chemical Industry Federation. A study on legislation affecting the chemical industry in countries of the ECE region will be undertaken jointly by the UN/ECE and the EC. Possibilities exist to establish closer cooperation with organizations such as UNEP, OECD and EBRD as well as with financial institutions on issues taken up by the High-Level Meeting on Cooperation and Sustainable Development in the Chemical Industry and, in particular, its follow-up process entitled "Chemical Industry - Sustainable Economic and Ecological Development" (CHEMISEED).

94. There have been delays in implementing the programme of work because of the freeze on professional recruitment. At the present time this affects the programme element "Market trends and outlook for selected chemical products". As a result the five-year survey will be issued later than expected, and without a statistical annex. The programme of work may also be seriously affected in 1993 if staffing shortages continue, noting that one of the two professional posts in the Chemical Industry Section has been vacant for an extended period of time.

95. (d) The twelfth session of the Working Party on Engineering Industries and Automation was held from 24 to 26 February 1993. Sixteen countries participated in the meeting. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/ENG.AUT/51.

96. The Working Party requested the Commission to allow it to hold its thirteenth session from 31 October to 2 November 1994 in conjunction with the sixteenth Meeting on Questions of Statistics concerning Engineering Industries and Automation and the PRODCOM Workshop. The Working Party took note of a draft decision submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation on the identification of funds for industrial projects in countries in transition and agreed to its being annexed to the report of the twelfth session.
97. Opportunities for cooperation with international organizations are being fully exploited, in particular with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, which is cooperating in the organization of the Seminar on Foundry Production and Ecology to be held in Minsk, Belarus, in May 1993, and with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on the development of internationally comparable engineering statistics. Further close working contacts are also being maintained with the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization and the International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering on the implementation of the results of the REHAB Workshops in the economies in transition, as well as with other international organizations, such as the International Electrotechnical Commission, the International Organization for Standardization and the International Federation of Robotics.
98. In addition to the activities mentioned above, the Working Party agreed to cosponsor a workshop to be held in conjunction with the electric vehicles rally in Krasnodar (Russian Federation) in August 1993, and to organize workshops to be held in 1994 on industrial robotics in Budapest and in 1995 on economic aspects of the implementation of new technologies in small and medium-sized enterprises in the Russian Federation.
99. (e) The second session of the Working Party on Standardization Policies was held from 12-14 May 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/STAND/36.
100. Delegations noted the importance of the Commission's work in the field of standardization policies, especially in the countries in transition to a market economy. Their integration into the European and global economy will depend to a considerable extent upon their ability to meet international standards.
101. In 1992 the Working Party conducted five transition workshops dealing specifically with technical barriers to trade and conformity assessment, four of which were held in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and one in Bulgaria. Further workshops, to be held in 1993, are under preparation at the invitation of the Governments of Cyprus, Israel and Croatia.
102. Scope exists in the future for closer cooperation with bodies such as the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems and the Committee on Energy in developing environmental and energy policies, standards and labelling systems.
103. Opportunities for cooperation with other relevant organizations, in particular the International Organization of Legal Metrology, the International Electrotechnical Commission, the International Organization for

Standardization and the European Organization for Testing and Certification, are being fully exploited.

AGRICULTURE AND TIMBER (Sub-programme 9)

104. (a) The Timber Committee held its fiftieth session from 20-23 October 1992. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/TIM/63.

105. The major change in the structure of the Committee's programme of work, in response to decision O (45), was made at its previous session. At the fiftieth session the process was one of consolidation, but with still further emphasis being put on activities in support of countries in transition. The Committee agreed on the methodology for treating the countries in transition in the next study of long-term timber trends and prospects in Europe (ETTS V).

106. In adopting its programme of work for 1993-97, the Committee agreed on activities in support of the countries in transition, on setting up teams of specialists on the effects of nuclear radiation on forests and forest industries, wood and energy and public relations in the forestry and forest industry sector.

107. On several occasions delegations have expressed their satisfaction with the cooperation between the Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, pointing out the complementarity of their programmes and the avoidance of duplication. It should be noted that the Committee's work concentrates on the supply, industrial conversion, trade and utilization of forest products and that of the European Forestry Commission on the management and policy aspects of forests and forestry. Very close cooperation exists where there is mutuality of interests. There are two joint subsidiary bodies, and in addition many activities are undertaken jointly. Joint sessions are held at intervals when major topics of mutual interest are to be discussed. Cooperation also occurs with the International Labour Organisation which is a joint sponsor of one subsidiary body, the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training. Working relations have also been established with the Commission of the European Communities.

108. The Committee has made a major input to the Global Forest Resource Assessment 1990, for which FAO has primary responsibility, but the Timber Committee, jointly with the EFC, has been responsible for the part covering the developed temperate-zone regions, including countries that are not members of ECE.

109. The Committee reiterated the view that its publications were an invaluable, and often unique, source of information on the forest and forest products sector. It has rank-ordered the collection and publication of statistics as third among its priorities. An ad hoc meeting was held in February 1993 which issued recommendations to improve the collection and dissemination of forest and forest-products statistics, to be examined by the Joint FAO/ECE Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics in June 1993, and aimed at maintaining the position of the Committee as the primary provider, in close cooperation with FAO, of statistics on forestry and forest products at an international level. The Committee noted the work being undertaken by the Conference of European Statisticians to evaluate statistical

publications, and expressed the hope that its own views on the importance of its publications would be taken fully into account by the Commission.

110. The Committee was informed that its Bureau had discussed with the Chairman of the Commission the lack of sufficient meeting-time in formal sessions; an additional half day of formal session was considered desirable. It was also noted that the use of informal meetings without language services created problems since the Committee's work was to a considerable extent highly specialized and technical and could not be discussed by a number of delegates in one language only. This was particularly the case for new member States. The Committee also gave its full support to the request of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training that interpretation facilities should be provided for five half-day sessions instead of four as provided for in decision O (45). The Joint Committee meets at two-yearly intervals. Likewise, two ad hoc meetings in the context of the European Long-term Timber Trends Study (ETTS V) will have a heavy agenda requiring detailed technical discussion on (a) review and analysis of the policy context (scheduled for spring 1994) and (b) review of the full draft of ETTS V (scheduled for late 1994/early 1995). It is estimated that a fruitful outcome of these two meetings will require eight formal sessions each for a satisfactory coverage of the issues.

111. The Committee noted that due to temporary staff shortages a number of activities scheduled for 1992 had had to be postponed, including two ad hoc meetings and certain preparatory work on the study of long-term timber trends and prospects (ETTS V). However, the very active support of member countries to this area of work was witnessed by loan of experts and funds to carry out parts of ETTS V. Paucity of resources also led to activities in support of countries in transition developing more slowly than had been foreseen.

112. (b) The Committee on Agriculture held its forty-fourth session from 8-10 March 1993. In accordance with the recommendation of the Working Group for the strengthening of the annual session of the Commission, the Committee's next session has been tentatively scheduled for 16-20 May 1994.

113. At its last session in March 1992 the Committee adopted a decision on the role of international, harmonized, commercial standards wherein the Committee presented to the Commission a request regarding the cooperation between the ECE Committee on Agriculture and the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission. As requested by the Committee, the Bureau played a more active role, notably in the preparation of the Committee's session. In addition to a Bureau meeting (August 1992), there was a joint meeting of the Bureau with the Executive Committee of the FAO European Commission on Agriculture (November 1992).

114. For the Committee, as part of its restructuring exercise called for by decision O (45), a major recent event in the cooperation with FAO was the acceptance by the FAO Council in November 1992 of the offer made by the Committee, and endorsed by the Commission, to establish as joint ECE/FAO bodies two new working parties: the Working Party on Economics of the Agri-Food Sector and Farm Management, and the Working Party on Relations between Agriculture and the Environment.

115. A special topic for discussion at the Committee's next session was chosen, namely the examination of recent developments and outlook for agriculture and agricultural policies in the European region, in particular in the countries in transition with emphasis on state price and support policies in the agri-food sector and the role of professional organizations. The Committee's workshops for countries in transition have addressed farm restructuring, food standards and quality control, and statistics. As regards assistance to countries in transition in the field of agriculture, the coordination of ECE and FAO activities will be examined at a joint meeting of the Committee's Bureau with the Executive Committee of FAO/ECA (July 1993).

116. In order to devote more time of allocated formal sessions to substantive discussions the Committee restructured its annual session and concentrated more on a selected topical item. With that aim also, instead of the full report being adopted at the closing session, the Committee adopted on an experimental basis a brief text containing the conclusions, decisions and possible recommendations. The full report was prepared immediately after the session by the secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau.

117. As the restrictions of meeting-time with interpretation had seriously affected the quality of the two new ECE/FAO Working Parties, the Committee requested the Commission to allocate to them, for their regular sessions, six half meeting days with interpretation instead of four.

118. The Committee agreed to cancel the publication of Volume I of the Annual Review of the Agricultural Situation in Europe.

119. For the whole of 1992 the FAO-funded post of Chief of the Agriculture Section was vacant (under recruitment), which reduced the professional resources for the Committee's work by more than 15% and caused some activities to be reduced or postponed.

HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Sub-programme 10)

120. The Committee on Human Settlements held its fifty-third session from 15-17 September 1992 in Lisbon at the invitation of the Government of Portugal. The report of the meeting is contained in document ECE/HBP/86.

121. The Committee re-evaluated and restructured its methods and programme of work on the basis of two consultations among heads of delegations and the responses to a questionnaire circulated to member countries. As a result the Committee agreed to streamline its work so that all the programme elements focus on two basic strategic objectives, namely promoting sustainable development and assisting the transition process. The number of elements was condensed from 17 to 9.

122. Accordingly it decided to discontinue the former three Working Parties and set up two new Working Parties, one on Housing Modernization and Management and the other on Sustainable Human Settlements Planning. The exact titles and terms of reference, as well as the continuation of their work, will be reviewed by the Committee every three years.

123. Stressing the necessity of annual sessions for the Working Parties, the

Committee decided to request the Commission to allow such a procedure (taking into account the reduction of the number of subsidiary bodies, the total number of meeting-days would thus remain unchanged).

124. The Bureau was enlarged to consist of a Chairperson and four Vice-Chairpersons to reflect the new plurality of interests in the region, and its functions were strengthened.

125. The Committee endorsed its new Terms of Reference and submitted them to the Commission for adoption.

126. Delegations expressed support for the Committee's continuing programme of workshops, noting that 8 had already been held and that 10 more were being planned. They concluded that the holding of workshops was an efficient way of addressing urgent needs of countries in transition.

127. The Committee agreed to cooperate with the ECE Committee on Energy within the Energy Efficiency 2000 Project. Financial assistance from the Trust Fund on Human Settlements will be provided to cover half of the costs of an expert to work for one year on Energy Efficiency Demonstrations Zones.

128. The Committee is ready to cooperate with other relevant ECE subsidiary bodies in the implementation of Agenda 21 adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), as it declared the promotion of sustainable development one of its two basic strategic objectives. Note is taken of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its forth-seventh session which calls for a contribution by the regional commissions.

129. At its next session the Committee will be required to consider the provisions of the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The Conference will be convened from 3 to 14 June 1996 in Turkey. The preparatory committee for the Conference held its organizational session in March 1993 in New York. The ECE secretariat participated in the meeting. The committee decided to organize its first regular session in April 1994 in Geneva. It invited regional organizations to participate actively in the preparatory process and to hold preparatory meetings in cooperation with the regional commissions.

130. With only three professionals servicing the Committee, resources provided by governments both in kind and in cash has made possible the implementation of the Committee's programme of work. During the past year 14 seminars/workshops were organized, from September 1991 until the end of 1992, in addition to formal meetings in Geneva.

131. The Committee expressed concern at the difficulties experienced by new member countries in attending its meetings and participating in its work. The Bureau discussed measures to facilitate their participation in meetings of the Committee.

132. The Committee decided, on a trial basis, to discontinue adoption of the report of its annual meetings at the end of the session. Instead the report will be formally adopted at the beginning of the next meeting.